

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE

A Talk Program

Prepared

by

ROBERT ARNOLD SCHLOSSER

President

of

LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

June 1985

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Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser, President,
LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Preface
Page

PREFACE

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE was originally prepared as a Talk Program for the regular meeting of The Livingston County Historical Society on the evening of 28 March 1985. Members of the Society have asked for copies of the text of the talk. In an effort to produce a better product for readers, the original text was revised, additional material included, and footnotes were added to form the June 1985 version of GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE.

Referring to the four histories listed in paragraph four of Page One, the full title of each history and its publisher are shown in the following items:

The 1878 history of Livingston County is known as THE HISTORY OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY ILLINOIS. Published by Wm. Le Baron, Jr., & Co., 1878.

The other history dated 1888 is known as PORTRAIT AND BIOGRAPHICAL ALBUM of Livingston County, Ill. Published 1888 by Chapman Brothers, Chicago.

A biographical history published in 1900 is known as THE BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY, ILLINOIS, Illustrated, 1900. Published by The S. J. Clark Publishing Company, Chicago.

The paper back "Inventory" by the WPA in 1940 is known as INVENTORY OF THE COUNTY ARCHIVES OF ILLINOIS, NO* 53, LIVINGSTON COUNTY [PONTIAC]. Prepared by The Illinois Historical Records Survey Project, Division of Professional and Service Projects, Works Project Administration, Chicago, Illinois, 1940.

Two of my brothers should receive mention. The invaluable assistance of Richard D. Schlosser of Joliet, Illinois, in composing and proofreading is greatly appreciated. James E. Schlosser of Kennewick, Washington, graciously donated Forty Dollars. The cost of producing thirty-five copies of this booklet is covered by this considerate gift from brother Jim. Hopefully, the receipt of \$1.25 per copy will keep this project funded for a long period of time. On behalf of the Society and myself, I sincerely thank brothers Richard and James.

The text and the masters from which these pages are copied are dedicated to and become the property of The Livingston County Historical Society.

Source material gathered but not used in the Talk Program shall not remain unused. Present plans are to continue JONES HOUSE history in an appendix of several booklets. In Part One of APPENDIX for GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE you will find reproductions of historical articles that appeared in various books and newspapers. Included are biographical sketches, obituaries, and selected articles pertaining to subjects mentioned in GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE. Part One will probably carry an August 1985 date.

Robert Schlosser,
June 1985.

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE

A Talk Program

June
1985

Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser, President,
LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Page
One

The title of this report, GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE, is a
shortened title. A full title would be:

A BIT OF

GENEALOGY

PERTAINING TO SOME OF THE FAMILIES IN THE HISTORY
OF THE JONES HOUSE

In history, as in all phases of life, people are usually of more interest than
objects, such as buildings.

02. This report may also provide answers to some of the JONES HOUSE
questions. Questions such as: "Why the name JONES if Jones did not build it?"
And, "Who was Jones?"

03. The Jones, for whom the house is named, is the late Henry C. Jones who
purchased the property in August of 1899, about five months before the turn of
this century. The father of this Henry Jones was also named Henry Jones, and
in the early records of this area there was still another Henry Jones, giving us
three men named Henry Jones to research. The last mentioned Henry Jones
preceded the other two, so he becomes the first Henry Jones in this work. The
father of Henry C. shall be listed as the second Henry Jones. And Henry C.
becomes the third. The starting point for the history in this report is the 1850
census of Livingston County. At The Pontiac Public Library, census records for
Livingston County are on microfilm beginning with the year 1840.

04. At the library, there are a number of books that were helpful in the research
of this report. Some of them are:

The 1878 history of Livingston County.

Another history dated 1888.

A biographical history published in 1900.

A paper back "Inventory" by the WPA in 1940.

Courthouse records are also important in research of this kind; records used
in this work include: deed, tax, probate, marriage, birth, and death. Still another
important source of information are old newspapers.

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE

A Talk Program

June	Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser, President,	Page
1985	LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY	Two

05. In the 1850 Census of Livingston County, the census entries for the village of Pontiac are found on page one. In 1850, according to that census, Pontiac had five dwellings, consisting of one hotel and four residences, and a total population of twenty-seven persons.

06. A mile or so east of the village of Pontiac, back in 1850, the census enumerator found eight people living in dwelling number seven, for which Charles Jones, age 52, is shown as the householder. I did a bit of research on Charles Jones.¹ Charles, a farmer and a harness maker, lost his first wife in 1841. In September of 1843, Charles Jones became a County Commissioner² and he was re-elected in 1846. In 1849, he married a widow named Rebecca Popejoy and with that marriage came a few Popejoys. In the Charles Jones household, in 1850, we find his new wife, Rebecca, age 44, and their baby boy named Charles, Jr., and twenty year old Joseph T. Jones, probably a nephew. The other four persons in the household were: Elizabeth R. Popejoy, age 42; Susan Popejoy, 18; Andrew Popejoy, 15; and Martin Popejoy, age 10. Apparently, Elizabeth R. Popejoy was a spinster aunt to the three Popejoy children.

07. In October of 1850, just two months after the taking of the census, Joseph T. Jones married Susan Popejoy. About two years later, in August of 1852, Henry Jones, the father of Joseph, and our number one Henry Jones, married Elizabeth R. Popejoy; thus, both son and father had found brides in the household in which the son had been a resident, and the son now had a new stepmother. In the 1878 history, on page 260, we learn that in September of 1847, this Henry Jones and two other men, J. H. DeMoss and Philip Rollings, were awarded a four hundred and fifty dollar contract to build a bridge³ where the present Mill Street bridge now stands. On that same page of history, we also learn that, in March of 1849, high water did considerable damage to the new bridge.

08. This first Henry Jones served as a County Commissioner⁴ in 1848 and 1849. In 1851, this Henry and a partner formed, east of Pontiac, the short-lived town of Richmond.⁵ The probate record for Henry Jones indicates that Henry died in September of 1854. The survivors, Elizabeth R. (Popejoy) Jones, the widow; and Joseph T. Jones, the only offspring; requested the appointment of Thomas A.

Footnotes:

1. See 1878 History, pages 236, 354, and 519. See 1860 Belle Prairie Census, dwelling numbers 1829 and 1830: Thomas A., age 38; Theodore B., age 27; Charles, Jr., age 10. Other family members are also listed.
2. See 1940 WPA Inventory, page 65.
3. Also see 1940 WPA Inventory, page 17, footnote 81, and the text to which it refers; and in the same book see "Early Progress" on page 22. Further information is found in the 1888 History, Page 523, in the first paragraph of a biographical sketch of Judge Billings P. Babcock.
4. See 1940 WPA Inventory, page 65.
5. See 1940 WPA Inventory, page 8.

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE

A Talk Program

June
1985

Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser, President,
LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Page
Three

Jones, a brother of the deceased, as administrator of the estate. This ends the account of the first Henry Jones of record in this area. There is a possibility, however, that this Henry Jones was related to Charles Jones, and there is a possibility that both of them were related to the second Henry Jones.

09. Returning to the 1850 census, we now take note of dwelling number twenty-four in Avoca Township, the household of James and Nancy DeMoss. Listed in their household in that census are four of their eleven offspring. The fourth offspring in the list is a married daughter, Emily (DeMoss) Jones. That census record names the seven children of Emily Jones, their names and their ages in 1850 were: Rebecca, age 17; Martha, 16; Melinda, 15; Henry, 12; Eliza, 10; Joseph, 7; and seven month old, James. The first five children were born in Indiana, Joseph was born in Iowa, and James, the baby, was born here in Illinois. The boy Henry became known as Henry C. Jones. This is the earliest public record that I have found for the person for whom the JONES HOUSE is named.

10. James DeMoss, the father of Emily Jones, died on the third day of February in 1852. Apparently he had little money, but he held a lot of farm land in section three of Avoca Township. In a deed for the sale of DeMoss land, Deeds Book C, Page 401, dated the 8th of January 1853, Emily Jones is listed as the wife of Henry Jones. This is the earliest public record that I have found that mentions our second Henry Jones, however, his signature is not on the deed as it should have been, and no address is given. The whereabouts of our second Henry Jones is cleared up when we read a biographical sketch in the 1900 history of his son, Henry C. Jones.

11. Our second Henry Jones was born in Ohio, and while yet a young man, moved westward to Hamilton County Indiana. In that area he married Miss Emily DeMoss, one of the eleven offspring of James and Nancy DeMoss, also of Hamilton County, Indiana. Five children were born to Henry and Emily while living in Indiana. These are the first five that were previously named in the census record. The fourth child, and the first boy, Henry C. Jones, was born at Cicero, Hamilton County, Indiana, on 11 February 1838. Here we should also read biographical sketches of members of the DeMoss family. These sketches are found in both the 1878 and 1888 histories. In these DeMoss sketches we learn that some of them removed from Hamilton County, Indiana, to Livingston County as early as 1840. There is a good chance that the Henry Jones family came to Livingston County with Indiana relatives before 1843.

12. After a short period of time the Jones family continued westward to Bellevue in Iowa Territory, and son Joseph was probably born there about 1843. In 1847, the family came back to this area. About two years later, father Henry joined the 1849 California gold rush. He stayed there for several years. Emily and her six children moved in with her parents, James and Nancy DeMoss in Avoca Township, and here the youngest child, James, was born. At the time of the census taking in 1850 and in January of 1853 when Emily signed the deed for the sale of DeMoss land, Henry Jones, Emily's husband, was probably in California. When his father left for California, son Henry was age eleven. Referring to the

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE

A Talk Program

June
1985

Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser, President,
LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Page
Four

book that J. Paul Yost recently released: on page 49 we learn that Henry, as a young teen-ager, became a helper in the cutting of timber east of Pontiac; an area near the home of his aunt and uncle, Martha and Philip Rollins, or Rollings as Philip signed his name. Philip's wife and Henry's mother were sisters.

13. The village of Pontiac grew very slowly until the coming of a railroad in 1854. That same railroad right of way still serves Pontiac, and it is now known as the Illinois Central Gulf Railroad Co. With the coming of the railroad, Pontiac expanded to the west, even beyond the new railroad trackage; and the population grew quite rapidly.

14. On the first of October, 1855, the second Henry Jones purchased lot six in block twenty-nine of Pontiac. That deed is recorded in book F, on page 296, and in the deed the address for Henry Jones is given as Emmet County, Iowa. Apparently, he had very recently arrived from Iowa. Henry had left Pontiac in 1849, now, six years later he was back, having spent several years in California and the remainder in Iowa. It is presumed, at least by me, that he and his family were rejoined at that time.

15. Lot six in block twenty-nine is where a two story brick residence now stands in the three hundred block of West Howard Street, next to an Amoco Oil Station. According to the 1878 history, this home was built by Henry Jones and it was the first brick structure to be built in Livingston County. I found deed evidence and tax evidence that the home was built by Henry Jones in 1856.

16. Soon after coming to Pontiac in October of 1855, this second Henry Jones opened a retail store, perhaps dealing in hardware or general merchandise. There is some evidence that the store may have been located on the corner where the Dixie Cafe operated for many years. Now well past his seventeenth birthday, young Henry C., son of the second Henry, apparently quit his timber cutting work and became a clerk in his father's store. Henry Jones rose quickly in village and county politics. On 12 February 1856,⁶ just four months after coming to Pontiac, Henry became a member of the board of trustees for the village of Pontiac; and in the following year he won the election for the office of County Judge, taking his office on 21 November 1857.⁷

17. Returning to the purchase of lot six. Apparently a small frame structure stood on the lot at the time of its purchase by Henry Jones. That structure may have been moved to the southeast corner of the lot, which would have been in the front yard of the brick home. There is a deed for an area of 16 feet on the front and a depth of 30 feet on which an old structure was standing. The word "old" was used in the deed. That structure housed a printing concern.

18. It seems very likely that the Henry Jones family lived in the new brick residence, and it is just as likely that they enjoyed visits with the people who ran the print shop in their front yard. Names of those who were connected with the

Footnotes:

6. See 1878 History, page 310.

7. See 1878 History, page 264, and 1940 WPA Inventory, page 67.

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE

A Talk Program

June
1985

Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser, President,
LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Page
Five

printing enterprise over a period of about four years include: Philip Cook; Mark A. Renoe; Robert P. Law; Goodyear A. Sandford; A. Dickerman; and Evans Blake. It seems evident that Henry C., in his late teens at that time, developed a liking for the printing and newspaper industry during his visits to the shop. His sister, Eliza, married Mark Renoe. Mark Renoe had a lifetime career here in Pontiac in the printing industry.

19. We now back up in time to the year of 1856. In December of 1856, Job Dye purchased property on the corner of Howard and Chicago Streets, where the Catholic Rectory is now located. Job Dye, born in Ohio in 1820, an experienced merchandiser, may have been seeking a business opportunity in Pontiac for a friend or relative, John Dehner.

20. Two months later, in February of 1857, John Dehner and Job Dye purchased a store building on the west side of the square, about where the Clothes Closet was located, lot nine in block forty-eight, in consideration of two hundred and thirty dollars. John Dehner was born about 1808 in Prussia, and his wife, Jane, was born about 1818 in Virginia. John and Jane had a son, Joseph A. Dehner, born about 1840 in Indiana. John Dehner and Job Dye were partners in a dry goods store known as Dehner and Co.

21. On 23 October 1857, John Dehner purchased the property in the three hundred block of East Madison Street on which the JONES HOUSE now stands. For five hundred dollars he received lot one to the east, which was vacant, and lot two, the actual JONES HOUSE lot. On lot two, at that time, there may have been a rather new one story frame building. It probably had two rooms and it could serve as a temporary home for the Dehner family. The village of Pontiac was growing rapidly, so almost any kind of housing was difficult to find.

22. Within a few days after John Dehner purchased the property, and even though there were many homes being built, an event that undoubtedly became a center of interest for onlookers, including young Henry C. Jones, would have been the laying of brick for John Dehner's new home. There is a fascination in watching a brick mason build a wall, brick by brick; and this being only the second home in the county to be built of brick, it would have drawn an extra amount of attention, day after day. The two story brick structure was built directly in front of the existing one story building, and with a doorway between the two units, the Dehner's had a residence of fair size.

23. It is doubtful that Henry C., although nearing his majority years, had dreams of ever owning this particular house. It would have been a good bet, though, that Henry knew each brick mason, carpenter, and worker by name. It should almost be a certainty that Henry was well acquainted with the Dehner family. Henry C. Jones and Joseph A. Dehner were rather important young men in the community. Both of them were working in businesses that were owned by their respective fathers. The Dehner firm was probably more prosperous than the Jones store; however, Henry was about two years older than Joseph and Henry's father was the County Judge.

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE

A Talk Program

June
1985

Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser, President,
LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Page
Six

24. If John Dehner had a strong German accent, he may have needed Job Dye as a spokesman in the property purchases for the business and residence, and in the construction of the brick home. This possibility became evident as I examined tax records for 1857 and 1858.⁸

25. By February of 1858, John Dehner's new home should have been completed. Also, it seems that the firm of Dehner and Co. was prospering. As Joseph Dehner, the son, gained knowledge of his father's business and could serve as his father's spokesman, the Dehner family probably had less need of a partner; also, Job Dye may have had his own ambitions. It was a good time to end the partnership. Job Dye received \$3,300.00 for his half interest in the store. Job Dye did have his ambitions and they are detailed in a biographical sketch in the 1878 history.

26. Upon its completion, in early 1858, there were few, if any, homes in Pontiac at that time that had the architectural excellence of John Dehner's new brick home. Let us now, however, skip ahead a year and switch over to the family of Judge Jones.

27. On the eleventh day of February in 1859, Henry C. Jones celebrated his twenty-first birthday. At this point in time, it appears that all four daughters in the Jones household had married, and son Joseph, who had been born in Iowa, had died. Those remaining in the Jones home would have been Judge Henry; his wife, Emily; son Henry C.; and son James, now about age nine. It seems that a month or two after the twenty-first birthday, both Henry's, father and son, developed itchy feet. Gathering together what money they could, the two of them left town and traveled overland, by ox team, to Shasta, California. There they set up a store to supply the gold miners of the area.

28. Rather soon after the two Henry's had headed west, a special election was held here in Livingston County to select a new Judge to fill the vacancy that the departure of Judge Henry Jones had caused. The new judge took office⁹ on 6 May 1859. In February of 1860, the brick home on Howard Street, of the absent Judge, was sold at public auction at the north door of the courthouse to settle a mortgage on the property. That sale, apparently, did not include the wife's dower portion; Emily received two hundred and twenty-five dollars for a quit claim deed in April of 1860. After a time, Emily rejoined her husband in Shasta. In Shasta, Emily died in 1868, and Henry died in 1893. So ends our history of the second Henry Jones.

29. And now returning to the Dehner family and their new brick home. A bit more than a year after its completion, and perhaps only a week or two after the departure of the two Henry's to California, the new home was the scene of a gala event. Joseph A. Dehner and Miss Mary A. Long were married on 21 April 1859, the Reverend J. Mendell, a Methodist Minister, officiating. In August of 1862,

Footnotes:

8. In two entries in tax collector's books, the Job Dye name had been written in as owner, and then partially erased or lined out; the name of John Dehner was then inscribed on top of the previous entry.

9. See 1878 History, page 265; and 1940 WPA Inventory, page 65.

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE

A Talk Program

June
1985

Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser, President,
LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Page
Seven

Joseph Dehner purchased the property to the west of his parent's home; here he and his wife and their offspring lived a number of years.

30. The Dehner and Co. enterprise expanded to the south, taking in the space where Lehmen's Men's Store now stands. Business was good and the Dehner family lived quite well. John Dehner purchased the southeast quarter of the block in which they had their home and expanded the family holdings to the west of the son's home.

31. Holding three-fourths of that block, the Dehner family had room for a stable; a place to store a carriage, or a buggy; a wagon of some sort; and a cart; and there would have been a shed for garden and lawn tools. The Dehner's very likely had grazing space for their horses, a place for a few chickens, a grape arbor, and a vegetable garden. And of course there would have been an outhouse or two. Around the two homes there would have been a lawn on which the grandchildren could play. An item in a local newspaper in September of 1871 states, "Uncle John Dehner has just completed a brick side walk six feet wide along in front of his residence on Madison street. The walk is 240 feet long and will compare favorably with any walk in town."

32. Here we shall leave the Dehner family and go out to Shasta, California. In 1864, young Henry Jones left his father's home and business and returned to Pontiac via a steam ship to Nicaragua, overland to the Atlantic, then by ship to New York, and then by train to Pontiac. Here in Pontiac, he and his brother-in-law, Mark Renoe, were in the newspaper business for a period of time. This is reported rather well in the several histories of the area.

33. On the second day of October, 1871, Henry C. Jones purchased property on the northeast corner of Chicago and Howard Streets, the cost was one thousand two hundred dollars. This location has more recently been occupied by the Vogelsinger family. Less than a year after purchasing the property, Henry became a bridegroom.

34. Henry C. Jones and Mary A. Bancroft were married here in Pontiac by the Reverend F. M. Chaffie, a Methodist Minister, on 23 September 1872, this date being the bride's twentieth birthday. Mary A. Bancroft, the bride, was born in Macedon, New York. Mary's mother, Jane Bancroft, died before Mary was age five. A year later, Luther Bancroft, the father of Mary A., remarried. To Luther and his second wife two children were born, James L. and Edna. The Luther Bancroft family came to Livingston County in 1861, and there is a biographical sketch of Luther Bancroft in the 1878 History.

35. To Henry and Mary Jones only one child, Helen M., was born. Helen died on 9 August 1874, having lived one year and one month. Helen is buried in the Jones burial plot in the Pontiac City Cemetery. In 1875, Henry sold his newspaper business here in Pontiac. Apparently he spent a year or more in search of opportunities before moving to Dallas Texas. In the Dallas area he developed a sizable business in the newspaper industry. After a few years, due to his wife's poor health, Henry sold out. He and Mary moved to Santa Cruz, California. At Santa Cruz, Henry became involved in a prune ranch.

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE

A Talk Program

June
1985

Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser, President,
LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Page
Eight

36. Beginning in 1875, financial problems overtook John Dehner. He lost his business and his home. Everything was gone by 1880, and he left town. Lot one, and lot two (on which the brick home stood), and also lots seven and eight, were sold at public auction at the west door of the courthouse on 16 December 1879. \$2,854.52 was the best bid for the four lots. It was made by Mary P., Rose, Edgar B., and Charles D. Camp. Subtracting purchase date from auction date, lot two had been held by John Dehner for twenty-one years, one month, and twenty-four days.

37. In May of 1883, Philip Arman purchased lots one and two from members of the Camp family.

38. At some point in time, Henry and Mary Jones adopted a child who had been born in Chicago on 25 December 1885. Although papers were never filled out, they raised and loved Nelle J. as though she had been born to them. Nelle is spelled: N E L L E .

39. In 1893, Henry C. Jones was back in Pontiac, his wife and daughter having remained in California. Henry was instrumental in having the local electric light company incorporated. That came about on 28 August 1893 and, for seven years, Henry was President of the Pontiac Light, Heat and Power Company. Incidentally, the heat part of the company's name came from the sale of exhaust steam. The steam was carried in underground pipes to the business section of Pontiac. Many homes and business places used "City Heat," as it was often called.

40. On the 5th day of August, 1899, Henry C. Jones purchased the brick home on lot two, and the adjacent unimproved lot to the east, lot one, from Philip Arman. This brick home was one of the buildings that were heated with "City Heat" for a period of time. When it was connected has not been learned. Henry's wife and daughter left California and rejoined Henry in his recently purchased home. Having attained the age of sixty-one years, Henry felt the need to reduce his work load and still be active in business. The ice business was his choice.

41. Henry and his wife's half-brother, James Bancroft, formed a partnership known as Jones and Bancroft, operators of The Pontiac Ice Company. The company had an ice house on East Park Street, near the northeast corner of Chautauqua Park. They also had a downtown office. A few years later, the operators of the Pontiac Ice Co. decided to change their status to that of a corporation. In February of 1912, the business was changed to a corporation and renamed: The Pontiac Ice and Fuel Company. It was probably at this time that the partners installed artificial ice making machinery. This set them apart from other ice house operators in this area.

42. For the brick home on lot two, this is the second time in this talk that the phrase, a gala event, is appropriate for the occasion, and it was reported on the front page of The Pontiac Daily Leader. Nelle J. Jones and the Reverend Roy G. Hershey were married on the first day of November, 1910. The Reverend John H. Ryan, a Methodist minister, officiated. This is the same J. H. Ryan who, in 1924, helped to form our Society and served as its first President for a number of years.

GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE

A Talk Program

June
1985

Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser, President,
LIVINGSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Page
Nine

43. In 1905, Henry transferred the title of the home, lots one and two, to his wife. With his health failing, Henry sold his interest in the Pontiac Ice and Fuel Company on 20 January 1920. Eight days later; 28 January 1920, he signed his will. Henry C. Jones died on the 13th day of June, 1921, at the age of eighty-three years, four months and two days. Having purchased the brick home on 5 August 1899, Henry and Mary had owned the home twenty-one years, ten months, and eight days at the time of his death. This is eight months and 15 days longer than John Dehner had held the property, including the interval of building the home.

44. Widow Mary lived another twenty-one years in the brick home. By this time, the brick home at 314 East Madison Street had become a landmark, and rather well known as the JONES HOUSE. On the 7th of September in 1942, Mary A. Jones died at the age of eighty-nine years, eleven months, and fourteen days. Her will was in order, leaving lot two (and house) to her daughter, Nelle J. Hershey. On 26 May 1944, Nelle died and the property passed to her husband, the Reverend Roy G. Hershey. Roy Hershey, was born 29 September 1882 in Osage City, Kansas, and he died on 24 June 1955. Roy had made arrangements that when he died the property would go to his protégé, Gerald Maxwell. On the 13th of November, 1957, Gerald Maxwell sold the property, lot two (and house), to John and Naomi Koehler.

45. A fire damaged various portions of the JONES HOUSE on the twelfth of September in 1975. A few months later, the prospect of demolition of the whole structure loomed. The late Francis E. Lehman and the late Reid R. Tombaugh, acting as concerned members of The Livingston County Historical Society, purchased the property on the twenty-first day of April in 1976. It was deeded to our Society on the third day of June, 1977.

46. The sale of the JONES HOUSE by Gerald Maxwell in November of 1957 was the first transfer of the property in this century in which money was the consideration. That sale broke a span of more than fifty-eight years during which the JONES HOUSE had been held and passed along by Henry to Mary, from Mary to Nelle, from Nelle to Roy, and then from Roy to Gerald, each time without money. Henry C. Jones, holding memories of his youth--when he watched the house take form, brick by brick--chose this home for his later years. It is appropriate that it be known as the JONES HOUSE.

47. The brick structure portion of the original JONES HOUSE has been restored, both outside and inside. To be a viable building it needs an addition behind the present building. Money for that addition was recently raised, one-half by donations from members and the public, and one-half from the Humiston Estate. The restoration of the JONES HOUSE is only one of a number of ways that a local Historical Society can serve a community. Historical Societies need community support. If The Livingston County Historical Society provides a worthwhile service to the community, I believe that the community should support The Livingston County Historical Society. Thank you for your attention.

